



Published in the Novato Advance  
Volume 91, Issue 20  
May 20, 2015

## Food Banks Helping Needy

This month I had the opportunity to see first-hand the amazing work the SF-Marin Food Bank does. The impact in Marin is astounding. Many in Marin would be surprised to know that more than 20% of residents in the county are in need of food assistance.

This past year the food bank distributed over 5 million pounds of food in Marin County — that's enough food for more than 12,000 meals per day.

The Food Bank developed an innovative model to distribute food. 70% of all food distributed in Marin is through a Pantry Network. There are 51 food pantries located throughout Marin. Remote communities are served, those with limited transportation options and few grocery stores; and individuals and families are accommodated through evening and weekend hours so that they are able to access food at times that are most convenient for them.

I was particularly impressed with the Healthy Children Pantry Program. Boxes were packed with nutritious groceries ready to be delivered to schools throughout Marin enabling families to shop right at their child's school. Many of the elementary schools in Novato participate in this program which provides critical groceries to families in need.

The food bank works diligently to address the needs of low-income seniors. One-third of Marin's seniors live on a fixed income below the elder self-sufficiency standard of \$27,000 per year to cover basic costs of living in Marin. Through their home delivery grocery program and brown bag pantries seniors have access to healthy food they can prepare at home.

Of course none of this would be possible without the countless volunteers that give their time. Volunteers sort food, pack boxes and help with distribution. If you are interested in getting involved visit:  
<http://www.sfmfoodbank.org/volunteer>

Another non-profit serving those in need of food assistance is ExtraFood. Founded just 17 months ago, ExtraFood's mission is to help end hunger and food waste in Marin County.

Extra Food picks up excess fresh food from businesses and delivers it immediately to nonprofits serving Marin's most vulnerable people. In just 17 months ExtraFood has delivered 210,000 pounds of food to 52 non-profit sites – truly amazing!

ExtraFood is a wonderful example of a dedicated group of volunteers coming up with a great idea and bringing it to fruition. See the myriad ways you can help at: <http://extrafood.org/join-us/volunteer>

A quick reminder that the South Novato branch of the library is closing May 23 and will reopen in a new temporary location nearby in late June. The School Community Library at Hamilton is slated for a Novato Unified School District owned site on C Street, just less than a mile west of the current branch location in the Hamilton Field hangars. The "pop-up" branch will be opened in a district-owned modular classroom at 931 C St. and operate with the same hours as the old location. A larger, twice the size of the current southern library branch, permanent modular structure currently under state review is slated for a September opening.

As always, my door is open to you. I welcome your suggestions and ideas. You can reach me at: (415) 473-7331 or [jarnold@marincounty.org](mailto:jarnold@marincounty.org).